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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000714

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER ON GTMO, RESHAPING HIS MINISTRY

REF: A. KUWAIT 613
[1](#)B. KUWAIT 659

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DEBORAH K. JONES FOR REASONS: 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. S) SUMMARY A buoyant Minister of Interior, still basking in his recent victory over parliamentary "grillers," told Ambassador July 7 that he had been given a mandate to reorganize, "discipline and focus" his ministry to deal with what "all now recognized" was a serious global terrorism threat. Shaykh Jaber Khalid said the Amir would almost certainly ask the President to release Kuwait's remaining four GTMO detainees when the two meet on August 3, given domestic pressure, the negative coverage of GTMO and President Obama's declared desire to close the facility. The Ambassador thanked Shaykh Khalid for his organization's recent detention of a senior AQ fundraiser and our improved liaison relationship, noting that KSS Director Muhaylan had held good meetings in June with his counterparts in Washington. The Minister responded defensively to a TSA critique of Kuwaiti airport security, citing the short observation time. Ambassador sought the Minister's support for special financing terms for Michigan manufactured ADVS turreted all-terrain vehicles being built under contract to the Kuwaiti MOI. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (S) An ebullient Shaykh Jaber Khalid Al Sabah welcomed the Ambassador to his office July 7, one day following festivities (complete with traditional Kuwaiti sea band) to celebrate his successful deflection of an aggressive parliamentary interpellation which accused him, inter alia, of misusing government funds for election signs. (Note: The Minister, a retired general who attended the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, adroitly deployed power point to deflect his detractors' accusations. End Note.) The Minister proudly pointed to two young female police officers from the Ministry's first graduating class of female officers, saying there was a need to have more women involved in security screening at the nation's ports of entry. He said he'd been given broad authority to reorganize his ministry, to instill more discipline and focus, now that there was a general acceptance and recognition of the global nature of the terrorist threat. The Minister thanked the Ambassador for the six International Visitor program slots designed to support his staff's evidence collection and presentation in court, and sought additional programs, e.g. to train his "senior" staff to administer police stations.

[1](#)3. (S) Ambassador thanked the Minister for our improved liaison relationship, both in terms of the timeliness and substance of our information exchange, and noted that KSS Director Muhaylan had enjoyed productive meetings in Washington last month. Ambassador also thanked Shaykh Jaber for Kuwait's detention of two important AQ facilitators in recent months. The Minister acknowledged this thanks, saying the GOK was in the process of installing enhanced surveillance equipment under a program he referred to as "The Camel's Head," presumably an allusion to getting the camel's

head under the tent flap. The Ambassador drew to Shaykh Jaber's attention the case of a Jordanian national, employed by KBR as a contractor with access to Camp Arifjan facilities here, whose fingerprint had been discovered during a forensics scrub of a pile of RCIED's found in 2007 in Iraq; the Minister took the information and immediately passed it to his senior staff. (Note: Within 24 hours we learned that this individual had been detained and remains in detention. End Note.)

¶4. (S) Turning to GTMO issues, Ambassador sought the status of Kuwait's rehabilitation center, noting that when Ambassador had visited on June 18th, the GOK had said the center would be completed in "one and a half to two months." Acknowledging that the Amir would "almost certainly" seek the release of Kuwait's four remaining GTMO detainees when he meets with the President on August 3, the Minister confirmed post's earlier assessment (reftel B) that there would be great consternation in Kuwait were the U.S. either to refuse or to release the detainees to a third country. That said, Shaykh Jaber asserted he wanted a rehabilitation program that was "better than the Saudis'," noting their rate of recidivism, and sought U.S. assistance, saying pointedly "we now have to begin where you left off, with due respect; to dismantle what you have created." In this context the Minister suggested that U.S. psychologists who'd worked with the detainees at GTMO and understood what they'd experienced cooperate with the psychologists working with the Kuwaiti rehab center, to "translate this American expertise into something applicable in Kuwait's cultural context." Ambassador suggested that we seek to avoid embarrassment to either the Amir or the President by trying to accomplish

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something prematurely. The Minister took the point but again stated that the Amir had no alternative but to seek his nationals' release.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador passed to the Minister the results of a recent TSA airport security conducted here in which a number of deficiencies were identified on the screening side. While responding defensively -- "you need to track these things for one month, not just a week," -- Shaykh Jaber said he was reorganizing his ministry to deal with these problems, which was one of the reasons he was bringing in more women.

¶6. (U) The Ambassador also raised with the Minister a request from Michigan based firm ADVS for the GOK to waive the letter of credit requirement for a "process payments" contract the firm had secured to build nearly KD6M worth of turreted six-wheel all-terrain vehicles to be used for border security and surveillance purposes. The Minister asked for a copy of the contract, which embassy subsequently forwarded, and agreed to study the issue.

¶7. (C) As Ambassador departed, Shaykh Jaber, who has long asserted the importance of weaning Syria away from Iranian influence, remarked "your government is doing good work with the Saudis and Syria."

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